

Formative Assessment

An Overview

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Measured Progress

The Assessment Toolkit
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Balanced Assessment System

A Balanced Assessment System: Part 1

The diagram illustrates a balanced assessment system over a semester. A horizontal timeline starts in September. The top section, 'Instruction & Formative Assessment', is represented by a wavy line with arrows pointing right, indicating ongoing instruction and formative assessment. Below this, a series of vertical arrows point down to a horizontal line labeled 'Curriculum/Instructional Program'. These arrows are labeled 'CSA' (Classroom Summative Assessment) and 'END-OF-MARKING-PERIOD TEST'. The bottom section, 'Summative Assessment', is represented by a solid horizontal line. The timeline ends with an 'END-OF-SEMESTER TEST'. A key at the bottom explains the symbols: a wavy arrow for 'Instructional Activity', a vertical arrow for 'Formative Assessment', a horizontal arrow for 'Feedback for Instruction', a vertical arrow for 'Feedback for Remediation', a horizontal arrow for 'Feedback for Program Improvement', and a vertical arrow for 'Classroom Summative Assessment'.

Classroom Formative Assessment

- Includes instructionally extended activities, e.g., observation, homework, quizzes, questioning
- Usually constructed locally
- Yields rich diagnostic information
- Happens while material is being taught
- Leads to instructional decisions
- Isn't used for grades

Classroom Summative Assessment

- Occurs after material is taught
- Includes unit tests or other graded performances
- Can be constructed locally or provided with curriculum materials
- Counts toward grades
- Isn't diagnostic

KEY

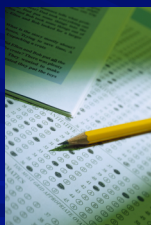
- Instructional Activity
- Formative Assessment
- Feedback for Instruction
- Feedback for Remediation
- Feedback for Program Improvement
- Classroom Summative Assessment

Assessment FOR Learning (Formative)



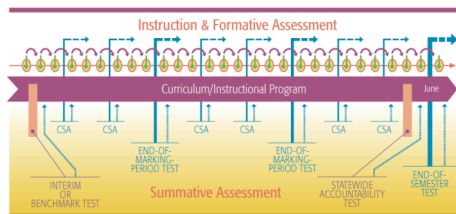
- Includes instructionally embedded activities
- Usually teacher/locally developed
- Yields rich diagnostic information
- Happens while material is being taught
- Informs and focuses instructional decisions
- Isn't used for grades

Assessment OF Learning (Classroom Summative)



- Occurs after material is taught
- Includes unit tests and other graded performances
- Can be developed locally or purchased
- Counts toward grades
- Isn't diagnostic

A Balanced Assessment System: Part 2



Interim and Benchmark Summative Tests

- Can be used as an early warning of performance on later high-stakes test
- Often constructed by external sources
- Can cover some or all of school year curriculum
- Provide broad domain or sub-domain coverage (not diagnostic)
- Subtest and subgroup results raise programmatic questions that require further investigation

Statewide High-Stakes Accountability Tests

- Provide broad domain or sub-domain coverage (not diagnostic)
- Constructed by external sources
- Subtest and subgroup results raise programmatic questions that require further investigation



Interim / Benchmark Assessments

- Are usually a form of summative assessment
- Can be used as an early warning of performance on later high stakes tests
- Often constructed by external sources
- Can cover some or all of a year's curriculum
- Provides broad domain or sub-domain coverage (minimally diagnostic)
- Results raise programmatic questions that require further investigation (*formative for program – not current student)

High Stakes Accountability Tests

- Provide broad domain or subdomain coverage (minimally diagnostic)
- Usually constructed by an external source.
- Results raise programmatic questions that require further investigation
- Satisfy accountability requirements – state and federal
- Can give the “big picture” view of state and school performance

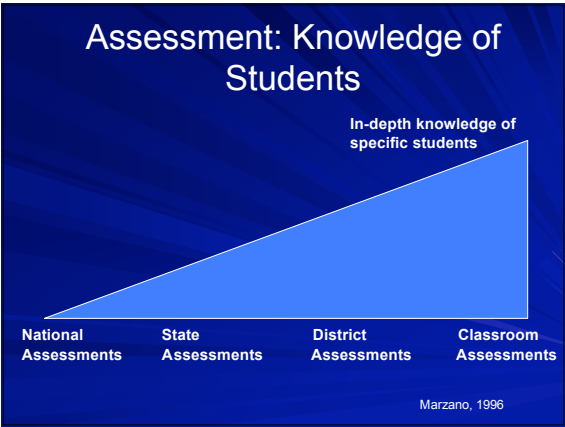
Issues

- Terminology hang-ups
- Gray areas
- Balanced assessment system parts are not interchangeable.
- There are forces trying to:
 - make classroom tests “teacher proof,”
 - do for teachers what only teachers can do for themselves,
 - make classroom assessments look like high stakes accountability assessments.




Three Types of Assessment

"(In)formative Assessments," *Harvard Education Letter*, 2006

	<i>Summative</i>	<i>Benchmark</i>	<i>Formative</i>
Key Question	Do you understand? (yes or no)	Is the class on track for proficiency?	What do you understand?
When Asked	End of unit/ term/year	6 – 10 times per year	Ongoing
Timing of Results	After instruction ends	Slight delay	Immediate



Assessments have various purposes, provide answers to different questions, address different users, and have varying implications for an assessment system.

Let's Talk About the Classroom



Balanced Assessment System

"To maximize student success, assessment must be seen as an **instructional tool** for use while learning is occurring, and as an **accountability tool** to determine if learning has occurred. Because both purposes are important, they must be in balance."

From *Balanced Assessment: The Key to Accountability and Improved Student Learning*, NEA (2003)

Essential for Effective Classroom Assessment



- Teachers are assessment literate.
- Classrooms reflect a balanced assessment system.
- Teachers are skilled users of both formative and summative assessment.

Formative Assessment

CCSSO FAST SCASS

Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended outcomes.

Assessment in Support of Learning

- Assessment quality must address the impact of the results on the learner and the learning.
- Assessments must:
 - go beyond merely providing judgments about student performance to providing **rich descriptions of student performance**,
 - evolve from being isolated events to becoming events that happen in **ongoing** series to reveal patterns,
 - go beyond merely informing instructional decisions of teachers to **informing decisions also made by students**.

Rick Stiggins, 2006

Research??



So, is this just the next new thing?

NO! Research soundly tells us that formative assessment can positively impact student learning.

Research on Effects of Formative Assessment on Student Learning

■ Bloom (1984)	1.0 to 2.0 *
■ Black & William (1998)	.5 to 1.0 **
■ Meisels, et. a. (2003)	.7 to 1.5
■ Rodriguez (2004)	.5 to 1.8 **

* Rivals one-on-one tutoring

** Largest gains for low achievers

Additional Research

Positive Effects of Formative Assessment

- Natriello (1987)
- Crooks (1988)
- Kluger & DeNisi (1996)
- Nyquist (2003)

The “Black Box” Findings

- Black and William's research indicates that improving student learning through assessments depends upon five factors:
 - Providing feedback to students
 - Students' active involvement in their own learning
 - Adjusting teaching to take account for results of assessment
 - Recognizing influence of assessment on students' motivation and self-esteem
 - Ensuring students assess themselves and understand how to improve

Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment,”
KAPPAN, 1998.

What Does Formative Assessment Look Like in the Classroom?

- Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success
- Engineering effective classroom discussions, questions, and learning tasks
- Providing feedback that moves learners forward
- Activating students as the owners of their own learning
- Activating students as instructional resources for one another

From "Classroom Assessment: Minute by Minute, Day by Day" Leahy, Lyon, Thompson, William, 2005.

Quality feedback should...

- focus on the learning intention of the task,
- occur while the students are doing the learning,
- provide information on how, why, and what the student understands and misunderstands,
- provide strategies to help the student improve,
- assist the student to understand the learning goals.


Ministry of Education, Wellington, New Zealand

Feedback and Grades

- Research shows that student given only evaluative feedback (grades) made no gains from one lesson to the next.
- Students given only descriptive feedback (comments) scores an average of 30% higher.
- Giving grades alongside comments cancelled the beneficial effects of the comments.

William, 1999

Student Involvement



- Self assessment
- Peer assessment
- Increases student engagement and student motivation.

Summary – Three Requirements for Effective Formative Assessment

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- Timing – during instruction
- Rich information – diagnostic
- Use of information – feedback and adjustment

Look at the following in light of the three requirements.

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- Item banks
- Computerized interim testing
- Reporting approaches for interim testing

Issues

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- Teacher time
- Grading practices

Where Do We Go From Here?



- What beliefs need to change to implement a true balanced assessment system?
- What hurdles have to be met?
- What policies need to be implemented?
- What help do we need?
